Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-28 (canceled).

Claim 29 (new): A method for confirming a tumor maintenance function of a candidate tumor maintenance gene, comprising the steps of:

(a) generating a rodent host cell comprising (1) a recombinant oncogene expression construct; (2) a genetic mutation, conditional gene knockout or an RNA reagent that causes reduced expression or activity of a tumor suppressor gene; and (3) a coding sequence for an RNA interference (RNAi) molecule against the candidate tumor maintenance gene, said coding sequence operably linked to an inducible promoter;

(b) introducing the host cell into a rodent wherein the host cell develops into a tumor; and

(c) inducing expression of the RNAi molecule,

wherein regression of the tumor indicates the candidate tumor maintenance gene has a function in tumor maintenance.

Claim 30 (new): A method for confirming a tumor maintenance function of a gene, comprising the steps of:

(a) generating a rodent host cell comprising (1) a recombinant oncogene expression construct, (2) a genetic mutation, conditional gene knockout or an RNA reagent that causes reduced expression or activity of a tumor suppressor gene, and (3) a coding sequence for an RNAi molecule against the gene, said coding sequence operably linked to an inducible promoter;

(b) inducing expression of the RNAi molecule;

(c) comparing viability or proliferation of cells expressing the RNAi molecule and cells not expressing the RNAi molecule,

wherein decreased cell viability or decreased proliferation of cells expressing the RNAi molecule, compared to that of an appropriate control mouse, indicates the candidate tumor maintenance gene has a function in tumor maintenance.

Claim 31 (new): The method of claim 29 or 30, wherein the rodent is a mouse.

Claim 32 (new): The method of claim 29 or 30, wherein the RNAi molecule is a RNA consisting of 19 to 29 basepairs in the stem portion of the molecule, and 4 to 34 nucleotides in the loop portion of the molecule.

Claim 33 (new): The method of claim 29 or 30, wherein the oncogene is selected from the group consisting of H-ras, K-ras, N-ras, c-myc, n-myc, EGFR, MDM2, BDNF, her2/neu/erb-B2, TGFb, RhoC, VEGF-C, AKT, abl, src, raf, fos, or b-catenin.

Claim 34 (new): The method of claim 29 or 30. wherein the tumor suppressor gene is selected from the group consisting of Ink4a/arf, pten, rb, and p53.

Claim 35 (new): A vector comprising (1) a Gateway cassette containing a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a gene-specific RNAi molecule, wherein the transcription unit comprises a promoter region, and wherein a Lac operator is inserted into the promoter region; and (2) a coding sequence for a Lac repressor and a coding sequence for a fluorescent protein or luciferase, wherein the coding sequences are separated by an IRES and wherein the coding sequences are under the control of a constitutive promoter.

Claim 36 (new): A lentiviral vector comprising

(a) a Gateway cassette comprising a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a gene-specific RNAi molecule, wherein the transcription unit comprises a promoter region, and wherein a Lac operator sequence is inserted into the promoter region;

(b) a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a tumor suppressor gene-specific RNAi (ts-RNAi) molecule;

(c) a coding sequence for a Lac repressor and a coding sequence for a fluorescent protein or luciferase, wherein the coding sequences are separated by an IRES and wherein the coding sequences are under the control of a constitutive promoter; and

(d) an oncogene under the control of a constitutive promoter.

Claim 37 (new): The vector of claim 35 or 36, wherein the oncogene is a dominant acting form of H-ras, K-ras, N-ras, c-myc, n-myc, EGFR, MDM2, BDNF, her2/neu/erb-B2, TGFb, RhoC, VEGF-C, AKT, abl, src, raf, fos, or b-catenin.

Claim 38 (new): The vector of claim 36, wherein the tumor suppressor gene is selected from the group consisting of Ink4a/arf, pten, rb, and p53.

Claim 39 (new): The vector of claim 35 or 36, wherein the constitutive promoter is a tissue-specific promoter.

Claim 40 (new): A host cell comprising the vector of claim 35 or 36.

Claim 41 (new): A host cell comprising (1) an oncogene, (2) a ts-RNAi molecule, and (3) an inducible gene-specific RNAi molecule, wherein the oncogene, ts-RNAi molecule, and inducible gene-specific RNAi molecule are cloned into one or two lentiviral vectors.

Claim 42 (new): A host cell comprising:

(a) a first vector comprising (1) a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a ts-RNAi molecule, and (2) a coding sequence for a Lac repressor and a coding sequence for a fluorescent protein or luciferase, wherein the coding sequences are separated by an IRES, and wherein the coding sequences are under the control of a constitutive promoter; and

(b) a second vector comprising (1) a Gateway cassette comprising a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a gene-specific RNAi molecule, wherein the transcription unit comprises a promoter region, and wherein a Lac operator is inserted into the promoter region; and (2) an oncogene under the control of a constitutive promoter.

Claim 43 (new): A host cell comprising

(a) a first vector comprising (1) an rtTA-coding sequence under the control of a constitutive promoter; and (2) a coding sequence for a Lac repressor and a coding sequence for a fluorescent protein or luciferase wherein the coding sequences are separated by an IRES and wherein the coding sequences are under the control of a constitutive promoter; and

(b) a second vector comprising (1) a U6-based transcriptional unit for expressing a ts-RNAi molecule; (2) a Gateway cassette comprising a U6-based transcription unit for expressing a gene-specific RNAi molecule, wherein the transcription unit comprises a promoter region, and wherein a Lac operator is inserted into the promoter region; and (3) an oncogene under the transcriptional control of the rtTA and tetracycline.

Claim 44 (new): The host cell according to claims 42 or 43 wherein the first vector or the second vector is a lentiviral vector.